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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7020
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 5427
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 7035
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 9665
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 5590
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 5487
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1608
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI PRIORITY 6557

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 001188

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/MLS; NSC FOR PHU, BADER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/14/2019

TAGS: PREL PHUM PGOV TH BM

SUBJECT: THAI FM KASIT SENDS LETTER TO BURMESE FM ON ASSK;
STATEMENT ON ARREST UNDER CONSIDERATION

REF: SECSTATE 46562

Classified By: Ambassador Eric G. John, reason: 1.4 (b, d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY AND COMMENT: Thai Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya told Ambassador on May 12 that he would engage the Burmese government on Aung San Suu Kyi's (ASSK) situation, on behalf of both Thailand and ASEAN. Kasit's personal aide told us late May 14 that Kasit had signed a letter to the Burmese FM and instructed his team to coordinate with other ASEAN countries in anticipation of a possible joint statement. PQAbhisit's office called the MFA as soon as reports of ASSK's arrest hit the wires, seeking confirmation and information about MFA's expected steps. Although Thailand has often been hesitant to press the GOB on matters relating to political reform, the RTG and Kasit personally seem genuinely willing to press the GOB on ASSK and are concerned with the unfolding events of her current arrest and detention at Insein prison. Whether the other ASEAN countries will form any consensus and allow a joint statement remains an open question; the head of the MFA Burma desk was skeptical at COB May 14. End Summary and Comment.

FOREIGN MINISTER KASIT SENDS LETTER

¶2. (C) Ambassador John conveyed reftel's points in a May 12 telcon with FM Kasit, urging the RTG to press the GOB on the release of ASSK, as well as her detained personal physician, Dr. Tin Myo Win. Kasit replied that he agreed and pledged that he would convey the message to Burmese officials on behalf of both the RTG and ASEAN in Thailand's capacity as ASEAN Chair. Kasit's aide told us May 14 that Kasit had signed a letter to his Burmese counterpart expressing his concern about ASSK's status.

MFA CONSIDERS A STATEMENT...

¶3. (C) We followed up with the MFA's East Asian Affairs/Burma Office Director Kallayana Vipattipumiprates May 14 after word of ASSK's arrest appeared on the wires. Kallayana noted that PM Abhisit's office called him as soon as word of ASSK's arrest hit the wires, seeking confirmation of the arrest and inquiring what steps the MFA would take. We later provided a copy of the Association of Political Prisoners in Burma (AAPP) statement on ASSK's arrest to Kallayana and Kasit's

aide, who said that FM Kasit, after reading it, instructed his staff to coordinate a response with fellow ASEAN members. Kallayana agreed that ASEAN needed to speak clearly on such a development, particularly in the wake of the ASEAN Charter, but he expressed skepticism that the Thai would be able to forge consensus. He said he was drafting material for Kasit's consideration for use in a statement. Ambassador will follow up with FM Kasit later May 14 to urge him to issue a strong statement.

...AND URGES COORDINATED MESSAGE ON BURMA

¶4. (C) Speaking more generally, and in the context of various Burma policy reviews currently underway, Kallayana said that the MFA hoped the international community could formulate a common position on Burma and specify what is expected of the Burmese government, in order more effectively to prompt the GOB to take positive steps. He said the lack of consensus allowed the GOB to play various governments off each other. He agreed, however, that the Burmese government must take the first positive steps, and that news of ASSK's arrest drove dynamics in the wrong direction.

JOHN